all appeared to us to suggest Persian inspiration. I heard one lady say with regret for a golden past: "What is the world coming to? Why nowadays the very peasant girls embroider silken caps for themselves!"

True enough; now that a little money filters into almost every home the women can get hold of coloured silk from India or Kashgar, and it was a common sight to see girls and women open a tiny home-made bag that hung on their tunic, and take out a strip or circle of calico, a needle, and a bunch of silk, and continue work on a dainty cap. The threads of the cloth were carefully counted and the design traced out in black thread. The silks they used were unspun, clinging masses that I found impossible to handle, and how they manipulated them so skilfully with fingers roughened, you would have thought, by field work, I could not divine. For about 1s. 6d. they can buy enough silk to cover one cap with minute embroidery, and they blend their colours, red, blue, green, orange, purple, yellow, and black, with unerring taste. We laid in a store of their favourite shades so that on occasion we could make an acceptable gift to a bride preparing her trousseau.

After a first experience of trifling gifts of balls and combs we had decided that it would be a crime to spoil the simple, spontaneous kindness of the children or their parents by indiscriminate giving. So we restrained a longing to distribute even sweets and pins, and only made an occasional present on very special occasions or for very definite services rendered. On the other hand, we made a note of such things as would be useful and acceptable, and gathered a hoard of them for our ultimate visits of farewell.

Amongst the women's crafts I have already mentioned the neat little "ashtrays" they conjure from the residual mush of apricot kernels after they have extracted the oil. Washing is amongst them a simple matter. Having no fat, they can make no soap, but there is a plant, called *himan*, which they grow amongst their vegetables, the seeds of which when pounded yield a delightful soapy lather. This is used for special washings only. Every-day cotton clothes are simply rinsed in cold water, flung on a flat stone and beaten with a wooden mallet. When